

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065).

2. (original): The strain of lactic acid bacteria according to claim 1 which is *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064).

3. (original): The strain of lactic acid bacteria according to claim 1 which is *lactobacillus* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065).

4. (original): A composition comprising the strain of lactic acid bacteria of claim 1 and an edible carrier or a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent, the composition being capable of stimulating mucosal immunity.

5. (original): The composition according to claim 4 which is in the form of a food or beverage.

6. (original): The composition according to claim 5 which is a fermented milk, lactic acid bacteria beverage, fermented vegetable beverage, fermented fruit beverage, or fermented soymilk beverage.

7. (currently amended): A method of stimulating mucosal immunity in a human subject in need of such stimulation comprising administering to said human subject the lactic acid bacteria of claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~.

8. (currently amended): A method of stimulating mucosal immunity in a human subject in need of such stimulation comprising administering to said human subject the composition of claim 4 ~~any one of claims 4 to 6~~.

9. (currently amended): A method of promoting IgA production in a human subject in need of such IgA production promoting treatment comprising administering to said human subject the lactic acid bacteria of claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~.

10. (currently amended): A method of promoting IgA production in a human subject in need of such IgA production promoting treatment comprising administering to said human subject the composition of claim 4 ~~any one of claims 4 to 6~~.

Preliminary Amendment

Appln. No.: National Stage of PCT/JP2004/012136

11. (canceled): Use of the lactic acid bacteria of any one of claims 1 to 3 for human mucosal immunostimulation.

12. (canceled): Use of the composition of any one of claims 4 to 6 for human mucosal immunostimulation.

13. (canceled): Use of the lactic acid bacteria of any one of claims 1 to 3 for promoting human IgA production.

14. (canceled): Use of the composition of any one of claims 4 to 6 for promoting human IgA production.

15. (canceled): Use of the lactic acid bacteria of any one of claim 1 to 3 for preparing the composition of any one of claims 4 to 6.